



STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Dear Vermont Teacher:

You may be aware that as a result of collaboration between homeschoolers and the Vermont Department of Education, after many meetings and hours of deliberation, a new home study bill was passed during the legislative session this year.

You have received this letter because you have done an end-of-the-year assessment for a homeschooler in the recent past. Thank you for your interest and support during this exciting time of change in the Vermont homeschool community.

The most important point of the new law grants successful homeschoolers an exemption from submission of a minimum course of study with their enrollment. This will reduce the amount of paperwork that must be submitted by homeschool families and reviewed by the Department of Education. Also, for children thirteen or older, it is only necessary to do year-end assessments for basic communication skills (reading, writing and math), American and other literature, citizenship, history and government in Vermont and the US, and the natural sciences. It is suggested that you read the bill and familiarize yourself with the changes before doing end-of-the-year assessments for homeschoolers. You can access the complete bill at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/legdoc.cfm?URL=/docs/2006/bills/house/H-862.HTM>

The new law also states that one of the options for end-of-the-year assessment is a report in a form designated by the commissioner, by a teacher licensed in Vermont. Enclosed you will find a copy of this form which was developed in collaboration with homeschoolers. A teacher can also choose to write a letter, using expectations designated by the commissioner. Enclosed are expectations for the information that must be included in a teacher letter.

In the DOE home study office it is our goal to increase consistency in end-of-the-year assessments. We have received a wide range of information contained in letters submitted by teachers. It is our hope that the new form and expectations will help to ensure that the same information is conveyed in the same manner for all students who choose to use a teacher report as their method of year-end assessment.

Homeschoolers frequently ask us at the Department of Education for names of teachers who are willing to do end-of-the-year assessments for homeschoolers. We would like to create a list of Vermont licensed teachers who are available and willing to do this. If you are available to provide this service, please send a brief e-mail to me at juliekuk@education.state.vt.us. In your

e-mail please include your name, telephone number, area you're available to serve, your expertise/endorsements and any other information you feel would be helpful to a homeschooler looking for an end-of-the-year assessment by a teacher.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to call me at (802) 828-5113 or e-mail me at juliekuk@education.state.vt.us.

Sincerely,

Julie Kuk, Workgroup Coordinator
Home Study and Independent Schools

Home Study End-of-the-Year Assessment Vermont Licensed Teacher Letter Expectations

It is expected that the teacher will review the student's curriculum and the student's content knowledge and/or skills in each subject area of the minimum course of study. An assessment must include a face-to-face meeting with the child. An individual progress assessment for each student must reflect whether or not the student is making progress commensurate with his/her age and ability in each subject area of the minimum course of study. The student should demonstrate, during the face-to-face meeting, his/her skill in reading, writing, and math unless the teacher is confident of the child's abilities in these areas based on prior contact with the child or current review of the student's work.

The letter should:

1. Include the child's name and age and the name(s) and address(es) of parent(s).
2. Include the teacher's name and address.
3. Include the date of assessment and school year being assessed.
4. **Students with or suspected of having a disability:** For students with disabilities, the home study statute requires an adapted curriculum to assist the child in making progress commensurate with the student's age and abilities in each subject area. The adapted curriculum should also factor in any limitations resulting from the disability. The teacher should indicate that he/she has been made aware of an existing disability and of adaptations that were made to the minimum course of study. If the teacher does not see progress commensurate with the child's age and ability, a disability may be emerging or it may have gone undetected. The teacher should indicate whether or not he/she has concerns with this lack of progress and that he/she has addressed these concerns with the parents. This is an important part of an assessment and the presence of a disability or suspected disability does not mean that the child cannot be homeschooled. The Department of Education provides technical assistance to parents of homeschoolers with disabilities.
5. Describe the method(s) of assessment. They may include results of on-the-spot testing, review of standardized test results, review of the portfolio of the student's work, demonstration of skills, etc.
6. The teacher should render his/her professional opinion as to whether progress commensurate with the child's age and ability was made in each area. Please describe this progress in terms of skills and/or content knowledge. Each area should contain some specific information regarding topics learned or skills practiced by the student during the school year. This does not mean that the teacher needs to restate the curriculum. If the teacher has concerns, he/she should identify the concerns to the parent and discuss ways to improve progress.
7. Include the teacher's signature and the date of letter.

For the teacher's reference, the eight areas of the minimum course of study are:

- (1) Basic communication skills- reading and writing (language arts)
- (2) Basic communication skills-use of numbers (math)
- (3) English, American, and other literature
- (4) Citizenship, history, and government in Vermont and the United States
- (5) The natural sciences
- (6) Physical education
- (7) Comprehensive health education
- (8) The fine arts